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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Agricultural Marketing Service

Continuous Factory Inspection Experiment
and
Labeling of Canned Fruits and Vegetables
in terms of
U. S. Standards



Washington, D. C.
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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Agricultural Marketing Service

CONTINUOUS FACTORY INSPECTION EXPERIMENT
and
LABELING OF CANNED FRUITS AND VEGETABLES IN TERMS OF U. S. STANDARDS

Many questions are asked by individuals interested in the continuous factory inspection experiment and in U. S. grade labeled canned fruits and vegetables. An attempt has been made to answer briefly the more important of these questions.

1. What is meant by "continuous factory inspection" by the Agricultural Marketing Service of the United States Department of Agriculture?

"Continuous factory inspection" signifies that qualified Federal inspectors of the Agricultural Marketing Service of the United States Department of Agriculture are present in the canning plant at all times it is in operation, observing the preparation and packing of the canned food products.

2. How did the continuous factory inspection experiment come about?

It was suggested by canners and consumers.

3. How may consumers identify the foods packed in plants under continuous inspection?

These foods may be labeled in terms of U. S. grades, such as "U. S. Grade A," "U. S. Grade B," and "U. S. Grade C," and may bear on the labels the legend "Packed under the Continuous Inspection of the Agricultural Marketing Service, U. S. Department of Agriculture." Even though the U. S. grade and the inspection statement may be omitted, these foods can usually be identified by a shield embossed in the cover of tin and in the bottom of glass containers; this shield, however, does not indicate whether the product is Grade A, B, C, or off-grade.

4. When was the present continuous factory inspection experiment begun in plants canning fruits and vegetables?

Continuous factory inspection was conducted in one plant during the canning season of 1939. In 1940, continuous inspection was introduced in five other plants. A number of additional plants requested the service for the 1941 canning season. It has been granted to all those plants in the appended list. This list also indicates the different commodities packed in each of the plants named.

5. Why is the continuous factory inspection service spoken of as an "experiment"?

The Agricultural Marketing Service wishes to ascertain consumer and industry reaction to products packed under the continuous inspection program. For the benefit of consumers and producers, the Service is constantly seeking ways to assist in marketing agricultural products more satisfactorily. If consumers develop a more wholesome regard for canned products as the result of such inspection, it is hoped a wider market will develop for canning crops. Hence, the Service is merely experimenting in a new field.

6. Why is the service being rendered only in a few plants?

Because of its experimental nature. Plants thus operating have been carefully selected, due consideration being given to the physical plant properties, excellence of plant equipment, the plant's location with reference to proximity to canning crops, and the willingness of the personnel to cooperate with the Service in improving their products. The Agricultural Marketing Service feels it can ascertain the value of such service by operating in but a few plants carefully chosen in various parts of the United States and packing a varied line of products.

7. Are there other points in relation to continuous factory inspection on which the Service, as an administrative agency, desires information?

Yes, there are many points concerning which the Service desires further information. Among them are (1) cost of continuous factory inspection, (2) how personnel can be trained best for such work, (3) what type of personnel is most suitable for such work, and (4) additional authentic information relative to proper commercial packing procedures, to enable the Service to improve existing Government standards for canned products.

8. Will the Agricultural Marketing Service grant continuous inspection service to any plant requesting it?

No. The continuous inspection service is an experiment at this time.

9. Will continuous factory inspection be established on a permanent basis?

It may be if it is found to be of demonstrated value to the industry and to the consumer.

10. What requirements have been met by plants participating in the experiment?

The plants have been thoroughly inspected to make sure that the sanitary conditions meet the rigid requirements of the Service. These

requirements have to do with sanitation in the plant, adequate provisions for personal cleanliness of employees handling food, and proper observance of superior housekeeping standards.

11. Are inspectors on duty at all times in plants operating under continuous inspection?

Inspectors must be in the plant whenever the plant is in operation.

12. Are these Government inspectors employed under Civil Service regulations?

Yes.

13. Who pays the expenses of continuous factory inspection?

Each cooperating canner pays a fee sufficient to cover the salaries of the inspectors plus 15 percent for the overhead expenses of the service. Fees are paid into the United States Treasury.

14. Will the prices of foods canned in factories under continuous inspection of the Agricultural Marketing Service be increased as a result of this service?

Prices currently quoted on these canned foods are in line with prices quoted on canned foods of corresponding quality packed in plants without this service. Conclusive data are not yet available, but there are indications that continuous factory inspection may result in reducing other expenses sufficiently to cover the cost of the service. In any event, it is believed that the cost to the canner will not be more than from two to four ten thousandths of a cent per can of the size sold to consumers.

15. Who develops the standards for the different Government grades for canned fruits and vegetables?

Standards are developed by the Agricultural Marketing Service after a careful study of the product, investigation of the problems of the canner, consideration of marketing practices, and checking on the needs of consumers. Preliminary standards are drafted and approved only after they have been submitted for consideration and suggestion to the producer, canner, distributor, retailer, and consumer and have been revised in the light of written suggestions from these interested groups. Approved U. S. standards for grades are revised from time to time as experiences in the use of the grades, advances in processing foods, and improvements in methods of inspection and grading may demonstrate revision to be desirable.

16. What are the general requirements of U. S. Grade A canned fruits or vegetables?

U. S. Grade A are fine quality canned fruits and vegetables, carefully selected as to size, color, degree of maturity, and freedom from blemishes. The fruits are meaty, highly colored, and ripe. They are almost always packed in sirup, which may be extra-heavy (very sweet), heavy (sweet), light (somewhat sweet), or water slightly sweetened. For certain purposes the fruit may be packed in water without any sweetening. U. S. Grade A canned vegetables are very tender and succulent.

17. What are the general requirements of U. S. Grade B canned fruits or vegetables?

The products in U. S. Grade B are of very good quality, though not quite so well selected as to color, size, and maturity as U. S. Grade A products. Grade B canned fruits are well-developed and well-colored, and are packed in sirup or water as described for U. S. Grade A. U. S. Grade B canned vegetables are not quite so succulent and tender as those used for U. S. Grade A.

18. What are the general requirements of U. S. Grade C canned fruits or vegetables?

Products in U. S. Grade C are of good quality but are not so uniform in color, size, and maturity as U. S. Grade B products. U. S. Grade C canned fruit may not be so highly colored, or so carefully selected as to size and symmetry, and though mature may vary somewhat in ripeness. The fruit may be packed in sirup or water. U. S. Grade C vegetables in some cases may have more food value than either U. S. Grade A or B as they usually are more mature than the products in the higher grades.

19. Are any canned foods which are below U. S. Grade C in quality found in retail stores?

Yes. Some canned foods fail to meet the requirements of U. S. Grade C but are wholesome, nutritious, and acceptable in flavor. If a canned food, for which a minimum standard of quality has been promulgated under the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act, falls below this standard, the label on the container must indicate in what way the food fails to meet the minimum standard of quality.

20. Are all canned fruits and vegetables, which meet the requirements of U. S. Grade A, B, or C, as established by the Agricultural Marketing Service, good foods?

Yes, they are all wholesome, nutritious foods.

21. What part may consumers contribute to the continuous factory inspection experiment and to the labeling of canned fruits and vegetables in terms of U. S. Standards?

Consumers may contribute to this experiment in inspection and U. S. grade labeling by conducting studies:

To ascertain consumers' reactions to the canned fruits and vegetables packed in plants under the continuous inspection of the Agricultural Marketing Service.

To ascertain whether consumers prefer canned products conventionally labeled with brand names and information necessarily carried on labels as required by law or if, in addition, they desire more specific information as to the grade of the product in terms of Grade A, Grade B, Grade C, U. S. Grade A, U. S. Grade B, and U. S. Grade C.

To ascertain consumer reaction to continuous inspection by the Agricultural Marketing Service in canning plants.

22. Where are inspectors of processed foods (canned, dried, and frozen foods) of the Agricultural Marketing Service located aside from in the canning plants under the continuous inspection of the Service?

Inspectors of processed foods are stationed at the Inspection Offices and Laboratories of the Agricultural Marketing Service where processed foods are inspected and graded.

PROCESSED FOODS INSPECTION OFFICES
AGRICULTURAL MARKETING SERVICE

Arkansas

Fayetteville - 520 W. Dickson St., P. O. 81

California

Fresno - 236 Holland Building

San Francisco - 4 State Agriculture Building, Embarcadero at Mission St.

San Jose - 841 The Alameda

Florida

Jacksonville - 204 St. James Building, P. O. 779

District of Columbia

Washington - Room 201, 224 12th St., S. W.

Illinois

Chicago - 301 Produce Traders Building, 1421 S. Aberdeen St.

Indiana

Indianapolis - 517 Federal Building

Iowa

Des Moines

Maryland

Baltimore - 801 Appraisers' Stores Building

Easton - 6 Glenwood Ave., P. O. 706

Massachusetts

Boston - 725 Appraisers' Stores Building, 408 Atlantic Ave.

New Jersey

Newark - 441 Federal Building, Federal Square

New York

New York - Room 820, 641 Washington St.

Rochester - 300 Terminal Building

Ohio

Cleveland - Northern Ohio Food Terminal Building, 4000 E. Orange Ave.

Columbus - 36 Old Federal Building

Oklahoma

Oklahoma City - 245 Capitol Building

Oregon

Portland - 312-A, U. S. Court House

Pennsylvania

Philadelphia, 601 U. S. Custom House, 2nd and Chestnut Sts.

Pittsburgh, 438-J, U. S. Post Office Building, 7th Ave. and Grant St.

Utah

Salt Lake City - 306 Capitol Building, 2nd, North and State Sts.

Washington

Seattle - 228 Federal Office Building, First Ave. and Madison

**CANNING PLANTS UNDER CONTINUOUS INSPECTION
AND
PROCESSED FOODS INSPECTION OFFICES**
AGRICULTURAL MARKETING SERVICE

JUNE 1941

○ Canning plants under continuous inspection
△ Processed foods inspection offices

Map showing the locations of Canning Plants under Continuous Inspection (circles) and Processed Foods Inspection Offices (triangles) across the United States, as of June 1941.

States shown include: Washington, Oregon, California, Nevada, Idaho, Utah, Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, Oklahoma, Kansas, Nebraska, South Dakota, North Dakota, Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri, Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, Florida, South Carolina, North Carolina, Virginia, West Virginia, Maryland, Delaware, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Vermont, New Hampshire, Maine, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, and Newfoundland.

Key locations marked include: Seattle, Vancouver, Portland, Lebanon, Freewater, Yakima, Salt Lake City, Marshalltown, Chicago, Olatona, Hart, Traverse City, East Jordan, Omt. Morris, Rochester, Sodus, New York, New Jersey, Philadelphia, Bridgeton, Newark, Cleveland, Pittsburgh, Columbus, Baltimore, Washington, Indianapolis, Matthews, Gibson City, Fayetteville, Oklahoma City, Jacksonville, Eustis, and Frostproof.

○ Canning plants under continuous inspection
△ Processed foods inspection offices

